

2 California
Regional
Facility

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation



GRAHAM HAMILTON.

Bare innocence is no support,
When you are tried in Scandal's court.
Stand high in honour, wealth, or wit;
All others who inferior sit,
Conceive themselves in conscience bound
To join and drag you to the ground.
Your altitude offends the eyes
Of those, who want the power to rise.
The World, a willing stander-by,
Inclines to aid a specious lie;
Alas! they would not do you wrong;
But all appearances are strong!

SWIFT ON CENSURE.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HENRY COLBURN AND CO.

CONDUIT-STREET, HANOVER-SQUARE.

1822.

1920-1921 (1920-1921)

1920-1921

1920-1921

1920-1921

1920-1921

1920-1921

1920-1921

1920-1921

1920-1921

1920-1921

1920-1921

1920-1921

1920-1921

1920-1921

1920-1921

1920-1921

FR
4859
L160
v 2

GRAHAM HAMILTON.

CHAP. I.

I COULD not rest. The scene of the preceding night was before my eyes; and then my thoughts recurred to home—to Gertrude: and the morning was far advanced when I fell asleep. My uncle sent for me at ten—I found him in his study. I tried to apply myself to business, but he must have perceived, though he did not remark upon it, the distraction of

VOL. II.

B

351237

my thoughts, and the constraint of my manner. As soon as I was released, I hurried to Lady Orville's door. I approached it twice; but each time seeing Lady Denmont's carriage, I did not venture even to leave my name.

It was nearly a week before I again saw Lady Orville; when we met, she told me of Moncrief's generosity, but she also told me, that he had treated her with some harshness and severity. She confided to me that Lord Orville was on the brink of ruin; that he accused her extravagance as the cause of his distress, and had declared to her his serious intention of separating himself entirely from her.

She concluded this melancholy disclosure, by enjoining me to leave her to her fate, and see her no more. "Oh! wherefore," I cried, "banish me your presence? Why have you permitted me to see—to hear—to adore you, and then say coldly, cruelly,—‘Never approach me again’?"

Lady Orville again bade me fly her; and yet her countenance seemed to express a different wish, and beseechingly to say, "Remain and comfort me—you are my only friend." I knew not how to act—but I obeyed her looks, rather than her words. I saw her again and again, and every time I saw her, I became more and more entangled. At length I re-

solved, cost me what it might, that I would break off an intercourse, which every day engrossed me more entirely; and which, novice as I then was, I felt could lead only to error and misfortune. Exhorted by her I summoned up all my resolution; I recalled to my mind the form—the features of Gertrude; I read over her innocent—her simple letters: but all these exertions and resolutions were insufficient to enable me to cope with the force and vehemence of my passion.

As a last desperate resource I plunged into folly, vice, and dissipation. I thought nothing wrong which could

be the means of estranging me from her. I sought other society—I courted new friends, and followed other pursuits. I indulged in profusion and extravagance; but by some unaccountable means I always met her, and sometimes in situations of great interest and difficulty. With her money-affairs I became connected; what I could to soften my uncle in her favour I did; and whilst we were both determining to fly from each other, chance threw us continually together. Though she was grieved, she did not express offence, nor had she firmness sufficient to break off a friendship which she knew to be so sincere—

so devoted—and which had, in moments of great embarrassment, rendered her such material assistance.

Notwithstanding my excesses, my uncle's munificence towards me became unbounded; his attachment and his pride in me increased. I was no longer called a Scottish adventurer, or a poor student—a friend whom Mr. Brandon had picked up at Edinburgh—but I was talked of every where as the brave Captain Hamilton's nephew,—Sir Malcolm the rich merchant's heir—and a young man of surprising genius. I was generally courted and sought after. Cards on cards crowded my table with invitations to dinners, concerts, parties, and balls.

But what was all this to me, after the first few weeks, when my success was evident, and my vanity gratified?—when women, for whom I did not care, made advances I wished not to return, and talked to me during operas and plays, which I was dying to hear? What was it to me to dance—to dine—to drink—to game—to sit the eternal length of dinners—to be mixed in the senseless crowding of assemblies—to witness the vulgar servility of those who were pushing their way into the world of fashion, and the equally vulgar arrogance of those who considered themselves its leaders?—What was it to me to hear, one by one, the names aspersed, and the characters

trodden down into the mire, of women who appeared to me all that is good, innocent, and pure? I was not happy. I look not back upon those days, however brilliant, as days of enjoyment. My vanity was gratified, and time passed swiftly by; but still it was not happiness—not such as I had felt, when first Gertrude had told me I was dear to her, when my heart pictured no other delight than spending the remainder of my life in her society.

My attachment to Lady Orville caused me bitter sorrow; I heard her spoken of in terms which I could not endure; I heard her name coupled with my own, in a manner which made me miserable,—Moncrief

taxed me with my conduct. As a friend, older than myself, he admonished me for Lady Orville's sake—for my father's—for Gertrude's—at least to be more circumspect. I reassured him. "Can you really say," he asked, "that my fears are unfounded?" "I assure you of it, upon my honour." "All I ask of you," he said, "is, not to deceive me." "Is nothing going on in secret?" "I never see her in private," I replied: "Upon my honour we do not even meet." He gave me his hand and said, "I believe you, and you are a noble fellow."

But very shortly after this a certain Colonel L., a forward profligate coxcomb, who, judging from his own

want of both, believed neither in honesty nor virtue, affirmed in my presence, that——. No, I dare not—I cannot even now repeat the terms in which he characterised her.

The blood boiled in my veins; too rashly I called upon him to account for his shameless aspersion. He smiled, and would have withdrawn from the danger of supporting his own words. Forgetting that I should certainly make Lady Orville's name as well as my own public, I listened only to my resentment, and expressions passed before others, which made it impossible that Colonel L. should not demand satisfaction. We met—Mr. Brandon

was my second. The Colonel received my fire—discharged his own pistol in the air; and I was compelled to declare myself satisfied. The affair with its cause became generally known, and had the natural effect of still farther injuring Lady Orville's reputation.

It were difficult to believe how many unfounded stories were circulated by malice against her. It was not indeed to be expected, that a censorious, officious, intermeddling world—ever greedy of scandal, ever ready to adopt the worst construction, and hasty to condemn—should shew unwonted mercy and compassion to one

whose superior endowments had so deeply mortified its vanity and excited its envy.

Moncrief was confident that these reports were unfounded; but he proved to me too clearly that my imprudence was the cause of them; and he urged me to find any pretext for quitting London immediately for some time. I pleaded a thousand excuses: and when I at last yielded to his arguments, I still urged a thousand reasons for putting off a step, which I could not deny to be absolutely necessary. In ten days—in a fortnight, I promised to depart. I undertook during that time not to approach Lady Orville's doors; and though for some

days I kept my engagement in this respect, I still delayed breaking to my uncle my intention, or asking his permission that I should leave him.

Lady Orville had of course heard, and she had been much affected on hearing of the risk I had run on her account. The gallantry and devotion of my conduct was in her eyes, as it would have been in those of most women, more than an atonement for its rashness and imprudence. She had twice written to ask me to come to her; but I would not break the promise I had made Moncrief. At length I heard that she was ill, and I could resist no longer. Sick of scenes of vice, a loser of more than I cared to

confess at the gaming-table, and under the consciousness that half the town believed me the favoured lover of a person for whom my admiration was such as not to permit me to lower her for a moment even by an unworthy thought,—with such feelings I entered her apartment, and at once communicated to her my intention of leaving London.

She seemed affected, and instantly said there was now no necessity for my departure—it was too late: malice had done its worst. “Oh yes, there is necessity,” I replied, “for I have no command—no control over myself, and I must leave you. You once commanded me to do so—it had been

better for me had I then obeyed you." "You obeyed me in every thing," said Lady Orville: "it is now unnecessary — you must not leave London." "May I ask you wherefore?" I replied hastily. "Ah! wherefore such confusion? Your tears, your embarrassment, all tell me that I am a source of misery and disquiet to you. Why do you start from me as from something hateful?"

"Oh, if I were to tell you," she replied, "that I returned that interest, that friendship, your looks and words and actions all prove that you feel for me—if I were to promise you my friendship, what would you then think of me?"—"I know not, but in that case

I would fly you still more, still farther," I replied, as firmly as I could. "Alas!" she said, in tears, "every friend I have thus forsakes me—they either leave me as Moncrief does, or I force them from me, as I do you—yet am I not your protectress, your friend in society? Is not my house at all times open to you? If I say it is shut, if my protection should be withdrawn?"—"It were better for me," I answered, struggling with a variety of feelings, "far better for me than any success accompanied by disgrace." "Could you bear to live, and never see me again?" "I know not, I answered, hesitatingly; but this I know, I could never bear to live,

if you were less worthy—if I became so.”

Lady Orville coloured deeply, and appeared struck to the heart by these words. They seemed to overwhelm her with confusion. “Oh! Mr. Hamilton,” she exclaimed, “where have you lived that you should cherish such noble sentiments? or rather, where have I lived that I should have forgotten them? Lord Orville is cold, severe, and unfaithful.” “Have you done nothing to render him so?” “I have never dishonoured him.” “Good Heavens! can you talk so coldly of such a crime?” “Mr. Hamilton, hear me: why in your own mind picture me a being superior to all others,

in order to wound me the more deeply—to use me the more unkindly? How inconsistent your conduct has been: why even risk your life in defence of my reputation if in fact you are indifferent?” “Indifferent! do I appear so? Look at me and see if in these eyes, this countenance, you can trace indifference to your welfare; but do not imagine I am base enough to mistake your friendship, your condescension, or to forget the principles of honour and religion; do not tell me of Lord Orville’s coldness, and your own unhappiness. I am the last in the world to whom you should name them.” “You have wrung my heart,” replied Lady Orville: “I am

alone upon earth; you know not what it is to be so. I pass my days in a struggle to appear gay, my nights in tears."

"Your mother," I said faintly, interrupting her, "your mother could be a friend." "She cannot sympathise with my woes—it would break her heart were she to hear them. Ah! have you never done any thing wrong, that you can speak with such severity to me?" I felt my strength fail; I saw Lady Orville's tears, and I faintly continued, "Moncrief is your friend,"—and as I pronounced his name, I tried to penetrate into her very soul.

Her fair arm, supported her head; her dark brown hair, carelessly dishe-

velled, fell over her pale cheek, yet wet with tears; her eyes were lowly bent—she raised them softly—she looked beseechingly on me. “Graham!” she called me thus:—the tenderness of that sound—the emotion of hearing such a woman thus call me—overcame my assumed firmness. I bent forward to take her hand,—perhaps to press it to my lips. Starting back, “Oh no,” she cried, “you misunderstand me: ’tis a friend—a kind, an ardent, an unspoiled friend, I wish for—one to soothe my harassed soul, to lead me back from the road of ruin, from the brink of that gulf of crime into which I assure you”—her look was truth—“I never yet have

fallen! It is for this alone I sought you."—"I will be that friend," I cried, throwing myself before her. "I will serve you with zeal; weep with you, if I cannot comfort you; pray for you, if nothing else is left me—pray with you, Lady Orville, and teach you to fix your affections higher than the transient dream of this world.

As I was thus speaking, the door opened, and Moncrief entered.

Never was confusion greater than mine; never was terror more strongly impressed on any countenance than upon her's—what then was my surprise, what my relief, when Moncrief, perfectly composed, and appearing not even to observe me, seated him-

self near Lady Orville, and in a somewhat anxious tone inquired of her, whether she had heard from her husband. With hesitation, with embarrassment, not knowing what she said, Lady Orville first answered that she had—then that she had not.

“ I conclude,” continued Moncrief, “ that I may speak to you openly before Mr. Hamilton : he seems,”—and he smiled with bitterness,—“ he seems perfectly acquainted with all that is going on.” “ Not in the least,” I said eagerly. Moncrief cast his eyes upon me with a glance of superiority and proud contempt I could not endure. He then continued, addressing Lady Orville—“ You know my wishes,

my proposal—the offer I have made is sincere; decide in whatever way you may think most conducive to your happiness: mine, you are well aware, depends on yours.”

He was strongly agitated as he spoke. Lady Orville wept, but made no answer. I felt that I ought to leave the room; but my embarrassment was such that I could not do it. At length Moncrief rose to depart, and as he passed me, said in a low solemn voice: “meet me to-night: I am engaged until twelve, after that hour you will find me at my own house.”

As soon as he had left the room, Lady Orville beckoned to me, and I

seated myself by her side. She took my hand, and said, “What must you think of me—of me to whom you have been accustomed to look up as something elevated and superior. Hear me, and learn to appreciate real worth—learn to know the distinction between the appearance and the reality of generosity of sentiment and magnanimity of soul. Moncrief,”—her voice faltered,—“Moncrief was to have been my husband: he had loved me from infancy—our parents were friends. I left him for the proffered hand of one of the richest and handsomest men in England. Lord Orville rewarded me as I deserved—but enough of him. After my mar-

riage, I saw Moncrief. Piqued at Lord Orville's indifference, and conscious that Moncrief still loved me with ardour, I sought his society, tortured his heart, and led him about in triumph as my victim—I felt pride in humbling the proudest of men. My vain heart exulted in shewing a man of integrity and honour a prey to the maddest attachment; but I was disappointed in my unworthy wish. Moncrief was firmer than I had expected: and, whatever pain I may have given him—however I may have deserved otherwise—he has never treated me but with the respect and attachment of a friend.

“ He sought to save me when he found me involved in debts and many difficulties : and now—now that Lord Orville, enraged at the magnitude of my offences, has determined to part from me, Moncrief offers to go to him, to attempt an arrangement of my affairs, and a reconciliation between me and my husband. But I have been so deeply injured by Lord Orville, that I cannot forgive him. My affections are entirely alienated; and I had rather be separated with all the obloquy that attends upon such a measure, than consent to return with him into the country, and see my friends no more. Think, Mr. Hamilton, of his proposal :

see—read it in his own letter, “That Lady Orville should give up her servants, her equipages, her house in London; that she should consent to reside, for the next three years in the country; and that upon these conditions an arrangement may be made for discharging her immense debts contracted by boundless extravagance, indiscriminating charity, and the most inconsiderate negligence.”

“And have you consented?” I said eagerly—“Have I!” she replied: “Oh, Mr. Hamilton, that I had your simple habits—your integrity—your real spirit of independence. Look at this house—the gilding of the ceilings, the pictures, the splen-

dour of the furniture.” “What are these things,” I said, “if one single debt be left unpaid? Such scenes as that of the evening of the ball must deprive you of all enjoyment of these luxuries. And after all, magnificent mansions and numberless servants do not promote the happiness of those to whom they belong. The mirth of the heart, the amusement of the mind, gaiety of spirit, social intercourse, and pleasant conversation, cheer and delight humbler dwellings. I care not for these pomps and ceremonies—you cannot in your heart regard them, either: and remember, that sooner or later you must be called upon to resign them.”

“ But the friends who now consider me as their first object—my parties, to be invited to which there is so much emulation — my suppers, at which politics are debated, and where statesmen settle their measures—all these will be lost for ever, and the world will seek some other general place of union, if I give up my present place in society, and retire into the country for three years.”

“ It will not be for three years,” I replied. “ How !” “ It will be entirely, if you once retire : if you once resolve upon an interval of reason and reflection, you will no longer care for these things, as you do now. With your mind—with your resources—you

will soon discover the superior enjoyment of a more rational and more social course of life. And oh ! Lady Orville, can one like you hesitate between the empty pride of being at the head of a train of persons, who would not refrain from going to the next ball, were you to die to-morrow, and the solid merit of living the ornament, the delight, and comfort of your family ?”

“ I wish,” said Lady Orville, half smiling, “ you were permitted to preach publicly to ladies in general ; you certainly would make many converts—but my case is different, your reasoning does not apply to it. I have no home to adorn, no husband who

requires my attention, no child to instruct,—my babes are not yet of an age to demand my care; and besides, if they were, I could not pass my time in hearing them their lessons. I hate to torment children; they are my only comforts now, yet my heart requires more, I feel too ardently to bear existence without ——.”

She hesitated:—I did not venture to interrupt her. “I am not yet twenty-four years of age,” she continued; “and what does life present to me?” “What it ever must present to all,” I replied, “a varied field of good and evil. Much happiness is yours—some sorrows have fallen to your lot; but I am convinced that of all the latter

the most difficult to endure is self-reproach."

Lady Orville seemed affected with my conversation—I fear these details may tire others; but let it be remembered by the lovers of a more laconic style, by those who suffer under an irritable impatience of monotony, and nourish by all incentives a passion for continual novelty, that I spoke to a woman, of herself and her own affairs—that I was not yet twenty years of age—and that something of the ardour of an enthusiastic lover broke in upon and relieved the tediousness of admonition.

"Had I once heard you speak thus, Mr. Hamilton," at length she said,

looking at me with irresistible sweetness,—“I might, perhaps, have felt amended, but now to me perpetual change of scene, variety of conversation, and multiplicity of acquaintance are become necessary. You once told me that existence was, as it were, dead without active pursuits, and that action was the light of life. I cannot labour — write I do; but were I to publish what I write, I should only make enemies, or incur censure. In the country I dread the tediousness of neighbours, the wrangling of companions—and then the ridicule! As all other fears in society lose their power, this fear increases; and no one who is not aware of the

manner in which others talk, laugh, and misrepresent, can at all imagine how unpleasant it is to be the jest even of fools." "Where there is complete heartlessness," I replied, "there must be a total want of sympathy for those who act from right feeling; but, be assured, the scoffers fear what they ridicule, and only affect to despise those who, they know, must deeply despise them. Act upon higher motives than the dread of this ridicule. Oh, if you knew how they already aspersed your name—how little they really love you—how soon the idol of the day is forgotten by those who pay the most abject adoration—and how every fault

is noted in those who, from whatever cause, are thrust into public notice !”

It was thus I went on, till Lady Orville discovered that she had listened to me for nearly three hours ; and I felt that attachment alone could have induced her to do so : this led to a more dangerous explanation. No one appeared to interrupt us. My imagination was overheated,—I forgot myself so far, as to forget what was due to her. I owned that I felt for her with ardour—Lady Orville blushed : never had I seen her look so beautiful. Hope and passion gave me a confidence in myself I had not before. I uttered the rhapsodies of enthusiasm, the promises which some

think are only made in order to be broken, but which I at that hour considered as sacred. At length I recollected the necessity of departing, and tore myself away—my heart beating with agitation, and my mind in strange disorder.

“ Mr. Moncrief requested me to remind Mr. Hamilton that he expected him this evening at twelve,” said the servant as I descended the stairs. “ Good heavens! I had forgotten it; and what hour is it?” “ It is half-past two,” said the man with a smile; and I immediately hastened whither Moncrief had appointed me. As I went out, I heard the porter say, “ Did you tell my lady that Lady

Denmont, and Miss Clairville had twice called this evening, but I refused them on your orders?" "I did," said the laquais aloud, that I might hear him, "you were quite right; her ladyship was too much indisposed to see any one."

CHAP. II.

THAT Moncrief thought I had deceived him, I was convinced ; that he would demand of me satisfaction, I considered as inevitable : with a mind possessed by these expectations, with passions excited, and an imagination inflamed, I arrived at the place which he had appointed. He had been waiting for me two hours—yet his manner was calm. “ It was kind of you, Graham,” he said, extending his hand, “ thus to comply with my re-

quest: and to disarm at once your brow of that haughtiness, which I perceive upon it, and to check a young enthusiast who may be delighted with the idea of sending a bullet into the bosom of the only friend in London who wishes him well, let me inform you, that whatever you may say, however you may provoke me, my arm is defenceless against your's—never, never will I do any thing to harm a person whose merit I appreciate, and whose inexperience I would guide.” Softened and somewhat calmed by this address, “I came not hither,” I said, “in the idea that you would act unkindly by me. I shall never forget the ser-

vices you have done me, and I ask you, Moncrief, to speak to me sincerely—to give me your full confidence; I think I shall not abuse it, or be deficient in that generosity and noble virtue, the example of which I have ever found in you.”

“Graham,” said Moncrief, after a few moments’ silence, “you have deceived me—it was, however, natural, perhaps right; for had you spoken the truth to me you had betrayed Lady Orville. Lady Orville loves you,” he continued in a hurried tone. “Loves me!” I exclaimed. “No childish denials; if you are too innocent to perceive it, others are not. She loves you—I see it, I know it;”

nay, you are aware of it; and, without returning her attachment, your head is turned, your passions are excited, and your vanity is flattered.” “My vanity!”—“Cease, and hear me: all I ask is, to be quietly heard, without affectation of surprise and without interruption. To Lady Orville I have been attached for many years: before her marriage I loved her with the romantic ardour of youth;—since that period, I have omitted no one act that fidelity and disinterested affection suggested for the protection of her innocence and the security of her happiness. It may not sound pleasing in your ears, if I add that I have felt for her all the

attachment that I could ever feel in honour to a married woman. That I could have made her forget her duty, I do not believe; and had I done so—had I, in the common acceptation of the world, succeeded with her, I had felt humbled, and not triumphant: for it is in her virtue, her excellence, her superiority over every other woman, that I place my pride and satisfaction.

“ I have even been careful, by my attention to propriety, to keep the busy tongue of scandal silent. I know it is said I love her absurdly, madly;—but what of that? no one can ever even hint that my devotion has forgotten the respect due to her, or ever

attempted to influence her mind to what is base. I have exerted myself to keep my own bosom sound and pure, that it might not, by communication, contaminate hers. Such conduct is, I am sorry to believe, rare; perhaps few would understand it sufficiently to admire it: neither was it for the praise of others, that I acted thus. The virtues which really apply to the great leading relations and circumstances of life are neglected and undervalued—enthusiasm, false refinement, exaggerated sensibility are more interesting. I wish not to interest;—but, Graham, I did hope the reward of so many years of devotion to one individual would have met with a dif-

ferent recompense. Lady Orville has at length forgotten what was due to herself, and I may add, to her only real friend. It is ever thus, when constancy and virtue possess the heart of man: when, departing from the ordinary track, he exercises a generous self-denial—when he struggles to overcome his passions, and to treat the woman whom he loves as if she were a rational being, she is sure to disappoint his expectations, to undervalue his attachment, and to throw herself away upon the first young enthusiast with whom she meets. That flattery which I have denied her, your ardent and admiring eyes have bestowed. From the first I saw it: she was capti-

vated by your frankness, beauty of person, and youth; she has not even paused to ask if there is one sterling virtue beneath. After years of long-tried acquaintance, after a devotion to her, I believe unparalleled, she calls you by the name to which I alone have a right to aspire—by the sacred name of friend. Oh woman! how worthless a thing art thou; and even in thy perfection how contemptible!”

I felt offended at his severity. To maintain the propriety of Lady Orville's conduct would have been indelicate and ungracious; but I took advantage of the generality of his last remark, and undertook the defence of

the sex. “Women were the comfort, the delight of life,” I said. “They were less selfish — they had more kindness, feeling, generosity, devotion, love—than men; who were cold, arrogant, tyrannical.”

“What then are your intentions?” said Moncrief, earnestly. —“Leave London—see no more of Lady Orville—remember the delicacy, the danger of her situation—act nobly, though I scarce expect it of you. If you cannot, follow the customary track. See her—be her ruin; go on in the old hackneyed course, under the name of Friendship; say you will pause here, and there — so far, and no farther; dream away hours in ecstatic bliss, as it

is called — and when you have depraved your own heart, and tainted her's, rejoice, if you can:—and for me, I shall henceforth leave you to your own reflections. I shall never intrude again. Of one thing, however, feel assured—if I do take this step, it shall be decisive. Will you, therefore, take upon yourself to replace me — to watch over, to defend, to save from error, a woman who might have been heaven's masterpiece in mind, in character, as she is in beauty, but for these fatal weaknesses, which will, I fear, corrupt all her virtues, and render her talents useless, her life dishonourable, and her death without consolation."

“ Depend upon it,” I said, “ with all your kindness and all your generosity, you do Lady Orville the cruellest injustice in supposing her guilty of ingratitude towards you : and as to the wrong feelings and the attachment which you condemn, though I cannot declare your suspicions entirely unfounded, yet be assured that they are greatly exaggerated.”

Moncrief was incredulous. I persisted. Our discussion was long ; each of us kept his temper, nor used one harsh or unbecoming expression ; but it ended, like most discussions, in the conviction of neither party. The hour of the morning to which we had prolonged our conversation, compelled

us to separate. I returned fatigued and harassed, but still vain and elated, to my uncle's.

Moncrief, hurt and wounded both by Lady Orville's conduct and mine, hopeless of rendering her any farther service, fully convinced that she would not break off her intercourse with me in that dignified and decisive manner which alone could save her reputation, determined upon giving up his vain endeavours, and departed into the country, without seeking another interview with her, and without offering any farther admonition or remonstrance.

Lady Orville's distress and difficulties now became so great and press-

ing, that it would have been cruelty in me to have abandoned her. Moncrief's absence caused her disquiet, but it was too evident that mine would, at this moment, have given her still greater pain. She praised him in the highest terms; she owned he was the only man she had ever seen, who entirely realized every idea she had ever formed of matchless integrity and perfect honour; she believed him capable of making the most generous efforts, and of submitting to the severest privations; but, she said, he required too much of human nature. —His expectations were even more absurd than my praises; the latter were mere flattery, exaggerations quite

out of nature ; the former were certainly rational and right in themselves, but wholly impracticable for those who lived in the world.

The fact was she was relieved, by his departure, from the justice of his reproofs ; and she was so fully convinced of her power over him, that she thought the not appearing to heed his absence, would secure his speedy return. She felt secure that his attachment to her was too strong to permit him to abandon her in her distress ; and in the mean time the society of Graham Hamilton — of one wholly new to life, too young to admonish, and too ardent to repress her hopes, to condemn her follies, or doubt her

prudence—made up for his temporary absence and displeasure.

I said all I could to warn her; but unfortunately, at the same time, I shewed how much I admired her. “A friend,” I said, “had a sacred character, and should be more considered than a host of lovers. Moncrief possessed a firm character, not to be trifled with. The conviction that she had forsaken such a long-tried friend for one who had no claim upon her, had stung his heart; he was more resolved than she imagined. It would be a painful struggle, no doubt; many a man would fail under it—I should—but not Moncrief.”

All these considerations I urged—

but in vain. She continued her own peculiar course; and as a strange example of the ruling fault and ruling virtue of her character, even at this time, I saw her relieve the wants of a starving family with the one half of the last small sum which she possessed, and buy a useless bauble which a jeweller had left for her inspection with the remainder.

With respect to the future, she professed her intention of confining herself to the most moderate allowance her husband might be inclined to grant her, if she were permitted to reside alone, and be the mistress of her own time and actions. She would consent to give up her house, her car-

riage, her suppers, and her balls ; but it must be done with effect ; the whole world must bear witness to the sacrifice ; her vanity must be completely gratified, before she could bring herself to endure the humiliating change.

She became solely intent upon the preparation of this concluding scene ; and at a moment when Lord Orville's affairs were the most seriously embarrassed—when her own character was at stake—when her health required the most prudential care, she employed herself in devising a *fête* which was to exceed every other in splendour and magnificence. It was not designed, like Timon's last banquet, of smoke and luke-warm water, to declare her

own ruin and to reproach the ingratitude of her friends—but to shew to the world she had loved so well, that the idol they had worshipped had been worthy of their adoration.

CHAP. III.

SUCH were the scenes in which I was engaged, when my uncle was taken ill. He had for some days complained of uneasy feelings. — I had neglected him—I felt it—and I resolved in future to be more attentive. I knew also that large demands upon my account had lately been pressing upon him from many quarters. I expected his anger—I had prepared myself for it; but I had no idea that my debts amounted to so

large a sum. To my confusion he now shewed me bills and claims to the amount of three thousand pounds, all incurred within the last few months. "Are these right, Graham?" he mildly said. "Impossible ! all imposition and fraud !" I exclaimed ; but, as usual, upon examination of the articles, I found little reason to question their correctness.

He then read the following items, pausing at each with an "*hey!*" of enquiry as to what they could possibly mean. "Jeweller's bill—Gold chain, fifty guineas!—Ring, fifty guineas! Broach"

"All presents, Sir."

"Milliner's bill—Shawl."

"Still a present."

"Blue fox muff, one hundred guineas!"

"Still a present."

"Pay them," said my uncle gravely, with no other observation than his slight customary gesture of shutting his eyes close when he wished not to perceive any thing that displeased him. He then drew a draft for the sum, and desired me to leave the room.

Until again admitted into Sir Malcolm's presence I suffered inexpressible anxiety. Had he denied me any assistance—had he uttered the severest reproaches—I should have been able to endure them: I was not, how-

ever, so hardened, but that I felt deeply the fault of which I had been guilty; and knowing his love of money and the habits of his life, I could not but apprehend some decisive and inexorable determination respecting me from the immoveable calmness of his manner. It was nevertheless a great relief to my mind to have these bills discharged; and I firmly resolved to be more circumspect in future.

Towards eight in the evening he sent for me: he put his hand to his head and again complained of being ill. "It may be the fancy of an old man," he said, "but I have taken it into my head that I am about to die." — "For Heaven's sake, if you

feel ill, see some one.”—“See some one!” he said incredulously, “hey! boy, it is not for an old man of seventy to see any one that can work miracles. It would perhaps be better for you were I to live a few years longer, but to what must be we must submit—I am satisfied.” “Sir, you make me miserable—this lowness, and your exceeding and most undeserved generosity.”

“I was never gay in my youth,” said Sir Malcolm, “as you are, Graham—never gave to admire the ladies, and waste my time and money upon the poor fools; but I do not like you the worse for it—it is well and becoming. You are handsome

and young—your passions are strong. Where there is much of violence in the character, the heart is not apt to be over-soft. You have forgotten your own friends—I sometimes think, nevertheless, upon poor Gertrude.—She was a good modest girl, Graham; and she is sick at heart, as I understand, from your unkindness. I had thought to leave her a little matter. I shall not be able to do so now.”

“Not able, uncle?”

“Why no, for every sixpence I have I shall be compelled to leave to you!”

“To me, Sir?”

“Yes, to you—you require it.”

Her wants are few—your’s, unhappily

for you, numerous. I have been the means of spoiling your nature some little I fear. 'Tis well I should provide even for the faults my indulgence has generated. I failed to think, Graham, when I sent for you to town to live with me, and take care of me, that youth and age could nae be well matched ; that the glittering gewgaws which could not tempt an old miser, might prove the bait and ruin of a young spendthrift. But don't look sorry, young one; I am not for saying a harsh word to you."

"If," I replied, greatly agitated, "you do not wish to make me truly miserable, do say every thing you can most harsh, most cruel—do, dearest uncle,

for I deserve all—only, if you love me, talk not of leaving to me what my father, uncle Richard, and dear, dear Gertrude alone deserve. You will live a long while, I trust in God! a very long while! and if you have riches to bequeath, leave them to such as know how to use them, not to me.”

“Why, Graham,” said Sir Malcolm, “you are playing the fool with me—you know, with all their virtues, I never loved any thing on earth but you—Hey! boy, what pleasure you’ll take in spending all those sums I have passed my life in gathering together! I have no child but you.—You have become my child. My

life has never been blessed; for the sweet noise of prattling children never enlivened my fireside. I thought they would have been a care to me; and I never could bring myself to marry, for fear of parting with my money. None know how lonely it is to live as I have done, till they fall into years. If there is something to look cheerful on us, something, when we go in and out of our houses, that attends us, expects us, watches for us, be it even a faithful dog, we are not completely miserable; but I had nothing to love me, Graham, till I knew you; and to expect too much of so young a lad, had been unkindler than ever your old uncle will be;—so don't

fret, boy; take your money; stay with me to-night; and if I don't die, (which I won't, if I can help it,) I believe I will buy myself a new house, and live like a gentleman the rest of my days."

Some tones in the voice of my uncle during this conversation touched me deeply: some feelings were moved within me, which had lain dormant for a length of time; these were rendered more powerful by his apparently weak state of health during the whole of the evening; and though Lady Orville wrote me several notes, expressing the anguish of her mind, and the magnitude of her embarrassments, I was too much affected by all

my uncle had said to think of leaving him. I read therefore to him, and knowing that the only book which he considered amusing was, "Grose on the Stock Exchange," I began and went on with it till he dropped asleep. He could smile at its wit, sigh at its truths, and rely upon its morality. It served him, as the Whole Duty of Man serves many people, for every possible state of humour, position, and sensation; and as he knew it almost by rote, it ended generally, as upon the present occasion, by soothing him into a deep slumber.

I looked on him with anxiety; and listened to hear his breathing; until, observing a letter in Capt. Hamilton's

hand-writing, half open upon the table, I snatched it up, and read to my astonishment, two pages of well-deserved censure of myself, concluding with these words :

“ Struck with such unexpected conduct in Graham, and well aware of Gertrude’s extreme sensibility, I have done all a father can do to wean her heart from a young man, who, I am sure, by his present neglect of her, would, upon a closer union, render her completely miserable. I have even gone farther ; I have endeavoured, by encouraging the addresses of our very worthy neighbour’s son, young Marriot, to engage her to give her hand in marriage to him, as he is virtuous,

rich, well esteemed by every one, and likely in every respect to make her happy. Do not conceive, dear brother, I mean to disparage Graham, or to attempt to injure him in your opinion; but having witnessed the secret agitation of my sweet girl, and her anxiety to receive even a single letter from him, I have not always been able to command my indignation. His neglect of her is not perhaps unnatural; but I wish, whilst he enjoys the pleasures of his new condition, to save my Gertrude from undeserved pain, and place her in a situation where she may at least find the quiet and peace which, I trust, belong to her more humble lot,

and at all events must ultimately be the reward of her piety and many virtues."

Thus it was that a few periods, read by stealth, informed me at once that I was on the brink of losing Gertrude, and that already it was not improbable, that, alienated by my neglect, she might have listened to the addresses of another. I cursed my own folly, felt offended with both Gertrude and her father, and as soon as my uncle awakened, pretended to be indisposed myself, and proposed retiring to my own apartment.

I then wrote several long vehement letters to the Captain and Gertrude, which were no sooner ended than,

recollecting that they could not go at that hour, I put them into the fire, and tried to compose myself to sleep. This was impossible; and with the first dawn of light I arose, and wrote again. I acknowledged my errors; but said I loved Gertrude too well to bear the thought of losing her. This also I did not send; for before my uncle had summoned me to his apartment, the following letter from Gertrude herself was put into my hands :

“ It is a long time, my dearest Graham, since I have ventured to trouble you, for the last three letters I sent are still unanswered. We have lived in hopes of hearing of your return. Your

dear mother has been ill—if you would write to her it would give her pleasure. Should any thing induce you to return, you will find that your flower-garden has not been neglected, and that your dog is ever with me. I have read all the books you desired; and in every thing, I think, you will find we have attended to your wishes. The time goes rather heavily for my dear uncle and aunt, without you; and there is a secret it is my wish to communicate to you, if I might hope that my dearest and earliest friend would still permit me to open my heart to him as before. I know not well how to write it, yet, without more words,

it is best at once to state the truth. My father is desirous of marrying me to our neighbour, a Mr. Marriot's son. I cannot obey him ; I often told you I should never marry—yet have I ever considered it as a duty to obey my dear father's commands. Could I see my dear cousin Graham, to advise with him, it would much console me. I try to keep up my spirits, but I have been ill. One line from you would, I think, be of much service to your dear parents, as well as to your affectionate friend and cousin,

“ GERTRUDE HAMILTON.”

“ My father is obliged very suddenly to go to London—ah, would

you write to request that I might accompany him!"

"No, no," I said hastily; "what is the use of her coming?—Young Marriot may marry her—it is best so. I have long indeed weaned my heart from her artless charms.

Why should I keep the flower withering on its stem for me? I shall return to my father's house no more. Its simple pleasures, its even course of life, will never again suit my perverted taste. As my uncle Malcolm says, my mind has learned wants and desires, which will prevent its finding any satisfaction or contentment in a rural and domestic life. Why then does it give me pain that

Gertrude, who would not now suit me, should marry? What is it to me, that another should feel happy in the possession of so inestimable a treasure? Fate, which divides me from her, has not alienated my affections—let me rather rejoice that she has already forgotten me. Has she done so?”

I again read her letter: “‘ Your flower-garden has not been neglected—your dog ——.’ This seems as though she loved me. Alas! what is it to me? she loves me only because she thinks it necessary to doat upon all her family; and yet I doubt, whether the warm affections which arise from the relations of private and

retired life be not stronger and deeper, than the turbulent passions which are born and nourished in the commerce of the world."

Sir Malcolm's voice aroused me from these reflections. From his room to my apartment there were ten steps—he was walking up them when I went out to meet him. "So here's a fine affair," he said, holding out his brother's letter; "there's brother Richard trying to marry Gertrude to young Marriot. I had a hint of it before; but see what he says to-day. The girl won't give her consent without seeing you first. Graham, what does this look like? It looks like what I've always thought; it looks as

if she loved you dearly, and wished to see you once more before she was separated from you for ever." Sir Malcolm then contemplated me. "Hey, poor girl, when she sees you, it will be all over with Mr. Marriot. Why, she will be here immediately. Read brother Richard's letter; and come down to my room; for there's many accounts to settle, and books to make up, and business to do this week, that we may afford to be idle when the Captain arrives."

"And is he coming?" I said, in an irritated tone! for Gertrude's letter now appeared to me a mere artifice—and there was something forward I thought in the father and

laughter both following me in this manner, perhaps too, by Sir Malcolm's direction—a stratagem, it appeared, to recover my affections—but it would not avail. “Read, and see,” said Sir Malcolm, in great good humour, which confirmed my suspicions; “why the girl won't be married without seeing you. I'll buy me a new coat, that I will, on the occasion. They will be here in a trice. We shan't have time to make ourselves look handsome. Hey, read the letter, and see how the old boy is preparing to coast it here.” I could not smile at my uncle's mirth. He saw that I was melancholy, and he left me.

I read the letter, and gathered from five pages, closely written, and crossed over at each end, that the Captain, Gertrude, and perhaps the suitor might very possibly set out almost immediately for England; but that their journey was not as yet completely determined upon. Was this necessary? Ought Gertrude thus to force herself into my presence? yet if attachment to me actuated her, ought I not to forgive it?—no, there was an indelicacy in bringing Mr. Marriot before me either as her acknowledged bridegroom or her discarded suitor. It is true I did not merit much delicacy—I had shewn little in my conduct to her. My hand, I felt, was

unworthy of hers; but was it necessary that I should witness a scene which assuredly must wound my feelings?—and, I should imagine, hers; for I could not but feel that I was improved in mind and person, since I had seen her; and that if I had attractions when we had parted from each other, those attractions must now be much increased. Her present suitor was a wealthy farmer, and, for any thing I knew, a man of an ordinary mind. When a boy he had promised little. Why should he, now that he was man, have realized more than the expectations he had then held out?—Was he to possess Gertrude? Was he to be united to a

girl unmatched, after all, by any that I had yet seen?

Vain were these reflections; vain the ill-humour such reflections occasioned. Gertrude's letter must be answered; or I should see her arrive, and with her that insufferable Mr. Marriot. What matter to relate the various resolutions that came and went through my mind: all ended in my resolving not to answer Gertrude's letter—not to accelerate or retard her journey to London, but to await my fate with the indifference I hoped I should still be able to command.

In the mean time I could not see Lady Orville; I could not answer the notes she sent me. My mind was per-

plexed, and I was still indulging a hope that they might not come from Scotland, when Sir Malcolm received a letter from my father, saying, “ that Capt. Hamilton being compelled to go to England to settle some money-affairs, Gertrude had intreated permission to accompany him ; that young Marriot would attend them ; and that they wished Sir Malcolm to take lodgings for them for a week.”

This then was past recall, and in an agitation of mind I cannot well define I awaited their arrival. The very evening before they came, when they were expected every moment, having walked out for the sake of

avoiding and putting off the first meeting, Lady Orville's carriage passed me in the street. She observed me, stopped, and insisted on my accompanying her home. As soon as I was seated in her carriage, she loaded me with reproaches for my apparent neglect and ingratitude: but when, upon reaching her home she perceived me cold, absent, thoughtful, embarrassed, she re-assumed the natural kindness of her heart, and gently inquired the cause of my unusual melancholy. My voice and manner declared too plainly the nature of my sorrow, and as I perceived that Lady Orville was not displeased at believing herself the real cause of

my agitation, I did not undeceive her. Indeed she was hardly wrong in her belief.

She conversed with me long—tears and smiles alternately varied her countenance, whilst she earnestly communicated to me all her sorrows, intentions, interests, and difficulties. She displayed all her fascinations, exerted all her power, and seemed to be anxious again to hear from my lips another declaration of admiration and of love.—She half opened a drawer, and shewed me a miniature of herself, which I had long implored her to give me. She had promised, then retracted—I now pressed her for it with more eagerness. She complied: I

seized it ; and taking the chain from her neck, she fastened it around mine. I called her *my* Augusta—I vowed never, never to leave her. “Remember,” she said, “all I have done for you : it is strange, but I feel more for you, than I ever felt for any one.”

The door opened rather suddenly ; the servant withdrew confused, then re-entered ; and in a hasty voice, to my astonishment, announced dinner. I had certainly forgotten both the hour and where I was. Lady Orville said, “That man will be my ruin. He is Lord Orville’s servant, and I fear his spy. He hates me. Oh ! Graham, do not leave me again so long, I am so miserable.” I made

a thousand excuses, promised next day to call without fail, and upon the night of the ball to make a point of being there early. She asked to have her portrait again, but I refused with confidence, for I felt secure she wished not what she asked. The man—the gentleman in waiting, I believe he was called—who had interrupted us so inopportunately, looked at me very earnestly and with rather a contemptuous expression, I thought, as he accompanied me down stairs and let me out of the house. I cared not for his looks, but I had more cause for anxiety on that score than at that time I was aware of.

CHAP. IV.

UPON my return home, Sir Malcolm informed me in a querulous tone of disappointment, that the Captain and Gertrude were not arrived. I felt greatly relieved at this intelligence, but the next day, about eleven o'clock I was somewhat abruptly told that they were come. I hastened out from the back of the house, and ran along the street, in order to postpone the first interview; but a few hours after, I accompanied my uncle to the lodgings he had taken for them, to meet

very reluctantly that Gertrude whom I had once loved so well. Alas! how was I changed since then, and how I hoped to find in her a stiffness or vulgarity of manner that might disgust me—a north-country accent—an unbecoming freedom, or awkward simplicity—a vacant laugh, displeasing to one of my refinement—or, at all events, a want of that air of fashion, that high-bred courtly manner, and soft address, which I had learned to consider so indispensable. But, as if to plague me, Miss Clairville herself had never appeared half so captivating, so lovely, so seductive in air and manner, as my Gertrude. Yes, it was my Gertrude—for with the joy she

felt at seeing me, tears mingled, and as I clasped her to my bosom, in the first transport of meeting again, the blush of confusion, the smile of surprise, told—I thought it told me—how much I was still preferred to every other. For was it not deep attachment that had tempted her so far from her native home in search of one who had appeared ungrateful and inconstant? What but attachment could have conquered pride—offended pride—deeply humiliated by my cold, my cruel neglect? What too had refined her manners, her form, and rendered those cheeks pale, which rosy health had once adorned? Did she not tremble, did

she not weep on my bosom, as her lips met mine? and did she not breathe out the words, "Graham, you have not then forgotten me," with an accent that awoke corresponding tenderness in my heart?

My uncle Malcolm, who witnessed this scene, and was better read in human nature than I had sometimes thought, gently withdrew her from my bosom, but only to place her upon his own. I asked after my father and mother—my heart was full; I wept with Gertrude, yet smiled when I looked upon her countenance. Capt. Hamilton at first received me coldly, but, seeing me thus affected, he took my hand and wrung it with tender-

ness:—he told me that my dear parents were well—that they would have been glad long before this to have seen me—that my father had desired him to give me his blessing; and then he sighed deeply, and paused, and looked upon Gertrude. I understood him, and felt the reproach. Former scenes of home came to my remembrance—my promises of attachment—her innocent love;—and all the vain-glorious joys of the world in a moment were forgotten.

Gertrude, who had at first so openly discovered her real feelings, now appeared embarrassed:—her eyes were turned towards the ground—her bosom heaved—she looked mournful,

pale, dejected—she was greatly altered, I thought; but every alteration had only rendered her more interesting, more lovely. Whilst I gazed with tenderness upon her, that d——d fellow young Marriot was announced. He entered, and I was at once convinced by his manner, his approach, that he considered himself sure of Gertrude's hand. He did not seem even to entertain a doubt — he was not the timid, the anxious lover: no—he was the happy, the acknowledged bridegroom. I looked upon Gertrude, and assuring myself from her coldness to him, and her timid, embarrassed glance at me, that she was unchanged, that I alone was be-

loved, I resolved, cost it what it might, frown or die who would, to make known my sentiments on the very moment to my uncle, and to regain the woman I adored — the precious prize, which I had so nearly thrown away. What to me was Mr. Marriot's happiness? Presumptuous young man! he to possess Gertrude! Never! and I could not but feel disgust and indignation at his calm and easy assurance.

With me to think was to act. I wrote no letter—waited for no opportunity—concealed no part of my feelings—but as soon as Mr. Marriot left the room, poured out my whole soul to Gertrude — declared that I

lived but in the hope of one day calling her mine; — that I would die sooner than see her hand bestowed upon another; — that they knew my violence, and might dread the consequence of driving me to acts of desperation. I spoke with all the ardour of a lover, with all the eagerness of intemperate and overbearing youth. I menaced the destruction of my rival—knelt before one uncle—grasped the hand of the other—confessed that I had been a truant, but vowed to heaven I would die were I not heard, or were my suit rejected. I considered no one's feelings—for whose could be so deeply interested as mine?

Sir Malcolm absolutely laughed

with delight when he heard me. The Captain began twenty harangues, and was always interrupted. Gertrude changing from pale to red, and red to pale, turned alternately her eyes to them and to me; and Mr. Marriot, who alone was absent from the scene, was now I perceived the sole obstacle to our happiness: for who could not see that Gertrude was ready, nay anxious, to consent to all I proposed? “And should he be an obstacle?—away with him! I will speak with him,” I cried; “let me settle with him—let me—” The Captain at once interrupted me. There was no need—he would manage every thing, he said. He would leave town—I should follow afterwards. No

word should be breathed at present of the change in his intentions. There was much delicacy, much nicety in the manner of conducting this affair; but Gertrude, who never had yet consented—never had yet approved the marriage, should finally inform Mr. Marriot that she could not agree to it.

“ I have done so before this,” said Gertrude;—“ Oh, though Graham had forgotten me, think not I ever had consented to marry another. Mr. Marriot knows I did not—he knows I cannot return his attachment. My hand was, I fear, half promised by my father—but my heart, who can bestow? Had they

over-persuaded me to it, it must have killed me." The Captain strained her to his bosom. The whole party were now in ecstasies, when Marriot's re-entrance into the apartment in which this scene had been discussed again threw us into consternation.

Gertrude's manner was cold. The Captain entered upon his most wearisome stories—well I remembered them again. Sir Malcolm shut his eyes, so as to perceive nothing. I looked embarrassed, and felt furious. Mr. Marriot was as calm, as satisfied, as easy as ever: his loud and not disagreeable voice discussed public matters carelessly. He talked of the dearness of provisions—said he should have no

objection to live a month every year in London — and then, simpering, asked Gertrude what her ideas were on that head. She turned away. My uncle, alarmed, desired me to return home with him ; and so fearful was he during the whole of that day, least a quarrel should take place between me and the young farmer, that he never suffered me to be out of his sight.

As soon as I entered my own apartment, in the evening, the portrait of Lady Orville caught my eye as it lay half concealed in my unlocked desk. — I coloured, and turned my eyes away from it. A feeling of deep shame and regret oppressed me ; but

I blessed my lot that I was still free ; for, oh, had I involved myself more deeply—had I forgotten Moncrief's advice, what now would have been my feelings? I resolved immediately to restore so dangerous a gift; to write a frank avowal of my attachment to Gertrude; to return with her to Scotland; and to renounce, for the rest of my life, every folly and every error.

This resolution having been made, I took up my pen to execute my intention, when my uncle broke in upon me, and I had only time to conceal the portrait, and follow him to his little parlour. There I found the Captain; and a grave discussion took

place as to all that was to be done. This conversation did not terminate until a late hour, but I retired from it with a spirit more calm and satisfied than of late. Tired out with two wakeful nights, I slept deeply, and dreamed of home and former times.

The ensuing day a note written in a fair Italian hand awakened me. I read it, and placed it with its fellows in my desk. It no longer gave me any emotion. I now thought the style affected, and, as soon as I could, hastened to Gertrude. Every hour of my time was engrossed by her. I saw and watched her with solicitude, with jealousy; and Marriot's presence rendered me miserable, for I could

not bring myself to believe that a man in love could look so happy as he did, if he were quite without hope. It was my uncle's wish that during the Captain's short stay, he and Gertrude should see all that was curious and interesting in London. Of course I was eager to accompany her every where; but what was provoking, Mr. Marriot still followed, as calm, as happy, and friendly with me as before.

The Captain's affairs were now arranged, and the day drew near on which they were to leave London and return into Scotland. The evening before her departure I had a full and unreserved conversation with Gertrude.

I threw myself upon her generosity, acknowledged my errors, but did not name Lady Orville: I did not even hint that I had ever thought of another, and Gertrude knew not how to suspect—jealousy harboured not in her pure heart. My presence had removed her doubts; she trusted implicitly to my professions.

How can I have the heart to dwell upon these moments—to paint her innocent happiness, her thousand charms?—With what tenderness, with what modest expressions of affection she heard me! and oh, when she said she loved me—loved but me, how gentle, yet how chastely pure each look, each word appeared! How deep

the blush when I called her mine, and pressed her to my bosom—how calm that heavenly brow, which no ill passions ever had defaced!

It was finally arranged that I should not accompany them, but follow them in a few days; and that an opportunity should be taken, during their journey or upon their arrival, of explaining the whole affair to Marriot in such a manner as might least offend his pride, or wound his feelings.

“Marriot will never break his heart as you would,” said my uncle, chuckling as soon as they were gone, “that is one comfort—he will never break his heart; and the girl has

never broken her promise, since she never gave one. But you are a sad fellow—you brought it all upon your self; however, you will be wise in future, I know." And thus a prospect of happiness opened again before me.

CHAP. V.

No sooner was Gertrude gone, than I thanked my uncle warmly for all his kindness; and urging him to add to it “ Let me follow her instantly,” I exclaimed, “ let me be in Scotland, at my father’s, before her arrival. The Captain will travel slow, will tell his long stories, Sir, and, after all the anxiety I have given her, she deserves some proof of devotion. Besides, I see Marriot is a good-natured mass of flesh and blood, who will not take any thing ill; therefore, fear

me not,—and I shall fret myself to death till I have made my beloved Gertrude every reparation.” Sir Malcolm turned aside; his eyes were filled with tears. “Your heart is in the right place, my boy,” he said, “after all;—yes, you shall go—and who knows but I may go with you? I have some little matters to settle—the day is too far advanced to set out now; let us sleep upon the plan; and it’s my idea, that if you do not change your wishes to-morrow, they shall not be thwarted because your old uncle is approaching to his 71st year,—hey, lad!” saying which, he returned to his papers, giving me several of them to finish, and, at the same

time, permission to go and secure places by the mail, charging me to take care to make a good bargain, and not pay a penny more than the regular fare.

With spirits elated, with my heart full of Gertrude, I was too happy to give pain to any one, and Lady Orville having written to me repeatedly during the week to intreat me at all events to see her for one moment, I resolved to call upon her during the few remaining hours I had left, to restore the portrait, to explain my situation, and immediately to follow my Gertrude, and make her mine. I called, therefore, in Portland Place. Lady Orville was at

home ; but the servant hesitated, and said she could not see me. “ Are you sure of it ? ” I replied, secure that she would be glad to do so, if she knew of my being there. “ Take up my name at all events ; I will wait for her answer.” “ I dare not interrupt her.” — “ Interrupt her ! How is Lady Orville engaged ? ” “ My Lord’s man of business is with her Ladyship.” The anti-room, into which I had advanced, was full of clamorous creditors, surly servants, and workmen who were decorating with roses and lamps the pilasters of the hall. I resolved to wait the departure of the lawyer, but as I was never remarkable for patience, I was just walking

away, when I perceived Lady Denmont's carriage driving to the door. I hastened towards it, but Lady Denmont would not look upon me.

This coldness provoked me, and the whole scene revived in me the keenest feelings of interest and solicitude. I hurried to the next coffee-house, from thence addressed to Lady Orville, a note couched in the most vehement language, and remained hour after hour, awaiting her reply in the utmost impatience and agitation. It came late, and contained but these words : "Graham, my ruin is complete—I have undone myself, and, I fear, involved you. Come to-night to the ball—or have you forgotten it with

all else I bade you remember? Speak to me as little as possible—I will take some opportunity of explaining myself.”

She has heard, then, of my intended marriage, I thought—and still, generous woman! she wishes to see me. And is this the ball, upon which she had so set her heart, her final adieu to the world, her last scene of splendour and magnificence, surpassing all that had preceded it—all that should come after. I had faithfully promised her to be there, why should I fail? I had much to say to her; and if I could see her a moment before the company arrived, it would be a satisfaction:—to leave her in suspense, and

when she is unhappy, would be ungrateful. Her kindness to a stranger, to a person wholly unknown, should not be returned in such a manner. The bearer waited for the answer. I wrote in haste nearly these words: "My dearest Lady Orville—I wish for a moment's interview to explain to you the cause of my apparent inattention to your commands: I will wait upon you early in the evening, in hopes of seeing you before the company arrive, as I must leave town for a short time to-morrow." I delivered the note to the servant, and returned home to dress.

When Sir Malcolm met me, and heard that, instead of having taken

a place in the mail, I was going to a ball, the pen dropped from his hand, his paper fell from the table, and he went off into such exclamations and declamations, upon my inconsistency, that I thought I should never be able to get away; however his usual good-nature prevailed; and before I went he said, “Graham, your union with Gertrude I have fixed my heart upon, but I trust you entirely: go therefore to the ball, but return as soon as you can.” He had detained me so long with his lecture, that I was in the utmost apprehension of being too late: I dressed myself as speedily as I could, placed Lady Orville’s portrait and chain,

which I had before taken off, around my neck, and set out, swearing the whole way at the hackney coachman, for not breaking his and my own neck, till I arrived in Portland Place.

CHAP. VI.

THERE is a time, as the wisest of men has said, for all things. There may be a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to be merry, and a time to be wise; but is there a time, when the heart is breaking, to mask the features with levity—and to conceal the throbbings of despair under the smile of courtesy and satisfaction?—The stoic has mastered his passions, from the generous idea of the nobleness of human nature. The Christian has met death, and smiled; but the

cause for which he suffered was to him of far more worth than his mortal existence. The patriot has bled for his country : but it was left for woman alone, without a cause, in the mere excess of vanity, to have appeared in all the excess of extravagance, and all the frivolity of fashion, on the very eve of the ruin in which she knew herself about to be lost for ever to the delights of that world, for which she had sacrificed so much. I could have sympathized in her feelings, had love impelled her; had disappointment, or resentment prompted the display ; had it been to win a new, or regain an old lover ; to avert misfortune, or to conciliate popularity ; but the most

frivolous of her own sex surrounded her; and of mine, for the most part men, who, forgetting all that is noble and useful in their lot and destination, consumed all their day, not even amidst the seductions of vice, nor in the indulgence of passion, but in the fopperies of dress and the fooleries of affectation. And it was for such as these, (no wonder they are vain) that a woman like Lady Orville—a woman of superior intellect, heart, feeling, taste, was making an effort hardly to have been expected from a devoted patriot or a Christian martyr!

Never was my astonishment greater than when, with my heart full, and my interest strongly excited, I ar-

rived at this well-known mansion, now glittering for the last time with a brief and temporary splendour. The brilliancy of the lights without and within, the pilasters of the hall decorated with wreaths of flowers, the servants in splendid liveries, two hussars stationed at the door, had attracted an immense crowd of spectators, constables, linkboys, and pick-pockets: my humble equipage was, however, made way for; and I found myself, as was my intention, the first person who arrived. A military band was playing as I entered; but the noise of Bow-street officers and footmen drowned and marred the blessed sounds. A party of desperate-look-

ing men were standing sullenly without the door of the hall. Some of their countenances I remembered : where I had seen them, I knew not. —The servants, who ushered me in, were busy and active. The whole scene was gay beyond description.

Splendid was Lady Orville's taste at all times. There was in her something of that ostentatious display, which the new-made sons of trade are fond of exhibiting; but still more of the old baronial pomp, which is thought due to illustrious ancestry and ancient custom. She was of a boundless hospitality, of a munificence, inconsiderate, often, and ill-bestowed, but still the feeling from which these errors

sprung was noble, and is now too rare. She was not only unwilling to give pain, but to refuse any pleasure she had it in her power to impart. Nor did she seek for flaws in the characters of those who surrounded her, in order to enjoy the petty triumph of excluding them from those entertainments, they would otherwise have enjoyed. No, Lady Orville's whole soul was benevolent.

Oh, how then could they bear to defame her? I never heard her breathe an unkind word of another. The knowledge that a human being was unhappy, at once erased from her mind the recollection either of enmity or of error.

It is unfortunately too true, and it has been already exemplified in the course of my narration, that a creature such as Lady Orville—all kind and feeling, wishing well to every one, sympathizing deeply with misfortune, and anxious to relieve it, may be led to commit more wrong, and to cause more misery, than the selfish and the depraved. Before I finish the sad history, upon which my imagination loves to dwell, of a being as fair as nature ever created—let me at least have the melancholy consolation of holding up to others those great and generous qualities, which it would be well if they would imitate, whilst they avoid her weak-

nesses and faults. Let me tell them that neither loveliness of person, nor taste in attire, nor grace of manner, nor even cultivation of mind, can give them that inexpressible charm which belonged to Lady Orville above all others, and which sprang from the heart of kindness that beat within her bosom. Thence that impression of sincere good-will, which at once she spread around; thence that pleasing address which, easy in itself, put all others at their ease; thence that freedom from all mean and petty feelings—that superiority to all vulgar contentions. Here was no solicitude for pre-eminence—here was no apprehension of being degraded by the so-

ciety of others—here was no assumed contempt,—here was the calm and unassuming confidence which ought ever to be the characteristic of rank and fashion. When this is wanting, and when, on the other hand, there is found every where an uneasy anxiety for distinction, a pining after petty advantages, a dislike of mixing with the public for fear of being confounded with the vulgar—when these feelings and notions generally prevail, they are a sure sign also of the prevalence of conscious mediocrity, and of the absence of all natural superiority.

Many there were who moved in the same sphere with her, many who committed the same errors, and

were guilty of the same forgetfulness of serious duties; but where was the benevolence which could not bear to humiliate or mortify?—which found every where, and upon all occasions, a pride and a pleasure in soothing, conciliating, and in making happy? Where was it then? Where is it now? I fear that in this narrow, timid, and little-minded age, we have no such spirit left.

As soon as I entered the apartments she came forward towards me, and, without one reproach, welcomed me to her last fête. The musicians were tuning their instruments, the servants were lighting the lustres; but no one was expected, not even the old ladies,

and card-playing gentlemen, for an hour. Lady Orville was dressed, and never—never had I seen her so handsome as upon that evening. She always looked best when her beautiful long hair was braided, and without other ornaments than diamonds.

Now let my situation at this moment be imagined—let it be remembered how very young I then was,—how very beautiful the person who addressed me : and then let me hope for forgiveness, if, feeling that it would give her pain, I broke all my resolutions and did not dare inform her that I was immediately going to be married. I faltered out something about having been very particularly

engaged the whole of the last week ; but smiling, she bade me say nothing farther, and, looking upon me, said—
“ I see the chain is on ; and as it was given, Graham, by one you will possibly see no more, promise to wear it ; it may save you when you are tempted to forget yourself ; it may also remind you of one whose short acquaintance has not, I hope, been productive of ill to you. Keep it ; it is perhaps imprudent in me, but I wish you to remember me.”—“ Can I, can I ever need any token for that purpose ? Do you believe I shall forget, or”
I was going to say, change ; but I recollected Gertrude, and full of em-

barrassment turned away. Lady Orville appeared also confused. The entrance of her little son was a relief to both. The child knew me; I clasped him to my heart, and the tears streamed from my eyes. She saw how deeply I was affected, and sighed—"It is well, Mr. Hamilton, we should part; I never behaved half so absurdly—however, you have many other admirers:" and she endeavoured to smile, and make light of what she had said.

We were still conversing when an antiquated Lady, very finely dressed, was introduced, and in a gossiping tone began to apologize for being so extremely early, from the fear of being

in a crowd, to which she added a long story about her coachman: she looked much at me, and I could see, thought it strange that I was there already.

The company now began to arrive in great numbers; and those whose over-delicacy had induced them to refrain from visiting the house of mourning, (for such Lady Orville's had been for the last ten days) now gladly crowded into this palace of pleasure and delight.

Lady Denmont and Miss Clairville came amongst the first; but I could not help gazing upon one alone: for the thought that I should see Lady Orville no more, and that she felt a

strong interest for me, engrossed and oppressed me.

Whether it was that I was feeble from my recent illness, and out of spirits I know not, but every thing on that evening offended and displeased me. The men seemed more extravagant than ever, their manners affected, their necks tied up till they had constrained all the ease and flexibility of nature. The women were like exotic flowers cultured in hot-houses; delicate, weak, pretty-faced, and unnatural. Lady Orville alone was still fresh and unfaded, full of health and beauty and exuberant life, with all the charms that belong to human nature, and much of what we ima-

gine of celestial excellence.—But I am fearful of fatiguing you with these eternal descriptions; for the actual events, however they break up and destroy every illusion of the fancy, whether in life or in romance, are all you look for. For me, a witness of this last scene, the picture of it still rises before me, still dwells in my remembrance, and I cannot withdraw myself from contemplating it. Yet let it pass. It terminated, as all soon or late must terminate; and the ensuing hour presented a scene as mournful and as unexpected as the evening's entertainment had been brilliant.

The company retired late—I watched the hats, feathers, diamonds, flow-

ers, faces, fans, floating from the crowded staircase into the streets,—the sun had already risen—all looked tarnished, faded, false. The light of the morning vindicated at once the superiority of nature, and like the touch of the spear of Ithuriel shewed the reality of things, distinguishing youth from age, and health from langour, which had been somewhat mixed and confused amidst the glare of torches and the splendour of silk and tinsel. I also prepared to retire; but first I approached Lady Orville, to take leave of her. She appeared extremely agitated. She seemed irresolute. She grasped my hand—her's was cold and trembling: every

one was gone. The servants entered to extinguish the lights. She groaned inwardly, saying, "See, they come;" and broke from me—I followed her a few steps, but, turning round, upon hearing a noise behind me, perceived the occasion of her terror: a middle-aged man was remonstrating, sometimes civilly, sometimes angrily, with a number of others, who had forced their way into the house. I too soon perceived they were the Sheriff's officers. They were preparing to seize beds, furniture, sofas, pictures, plate, and every thing.

I could not leave Lady Orville at such a moment—I followed her to

her own apartment—the door was fastened within. Just heavens! I thought, she perhaps is meditating self-destruction. What dreadful meaning might not attach itself to some passages in her letter! And what was the import of *farewell*, pronounced as she had pronounced it, when she parted from me. I now also remembered, that as she took leave, she looked upon each guest with a mournful eye; and when her mother had asked her at what hour she should see her on the morrow, her answer had been singular, “All hours will be the same to me.” Full of the dreadful idea, I hastened to force the door; those who were employed in

taking down the furniture, assisted me in my efforts. We broke in upon her last asylum; when, oh heavens! how were we struck upon seeing her kneeling to heaven, and praying for that fortitude and that resignation, she so much needed!

Though the light of day shone full upon her, though the ornaments of the night were still upon her neck, she did not look the less fresh and beautiful. Nor was she offended at my entrance, but, turning upon me a look so benignant that it was almost cheerful, she bade me calm myself, and spoke with civility to those who were employed in their ungracious duty.

I interrupted them in their task, and stated who I was, "I am Sir Malcolm Hamilton's heir," I said; "my fortune will be considerable—if you will forbear to pursue these claims, if you will trust to my solemn promise, this morning I will pledge all I possess, for your speedy payment—my uncle will, I am sure, assist." "It is in vain, Graham, to talk so wildly," said Lady Orville, affected; "Lord Orville's ruin is complete; I am a lodger only now, and a stranger in this house; but sigh not thus, for my mind is made up—I have spent too many years already in all the folly and excess of this way of life. It is better for me to suffer. Pro-

sperity and flattery harden the heart. These gentlemen are not inhuman: they are only performing a hard but just duty. See, at least, that if I have out-done others in extravagance, I know how to bear a reverse well. There is nothing that affects me in all this — only Moncrief: — could I but see Moncrief before I go!”

“And whither are you going?” “I am going to my mother, to Lady Denmont assuredly. And then—and then you shall see me—only for every reason leave me now; for, as it is, your name, I fear, has already been breathed with mine, and at this period your presence might do me irreparable harm.”

As she was speaking, her little boy, whom the noise had awakened in terror, was brought in to see her: the nurse was in violent hysterics; the boy only called out "Dear, dear Mamma." Lady Orville no longer bore up—her voice choaked within her—her frame trembled—she fell into her attendant's arms. I caught the child up—he pressed her lips: that kiss revived her—that kiss from her child. "My little darling—my fine sweet boy—God bless you!—God bless you!" She said no more, but sobbed, unrestrained, the heart's convulsive sob. "Oh Mariette!" she said to her maid, "what a desert our dwelling will be without this little

cherub!" "Must he leave you?" I asked. "Lord Orville sent for him some days ago. Oh! Mr. Hamilton, by not coming to me for these ten days past what scenes of anguish you have escaped? Your absence has done me a real service: I have learned to depend upon myself for support, and no longer to cling to others; I was too much attached to—to this world and all its vanities. The justice of heaven has seen fit to punish me—I am resigned." The child again embraced her. "Oh! good God!" she exclaimed, falling on her knees, and clasping him to her heart, "how I overrated my strength! And did I think I could part with thee, darling—and

did a mother think she could bear to lose her own, her only treasure?"

"Dear mother," said the boy, "sweet mamma, I will be so good always."

Lady Orville was unable to support herself any longer, but gave way to despair.

The gentleman who had spoken before, I believe Lord Orville's agent, now entered into conversation with the Sheriff's officers. I perceived by the tone of his voice, which was loud and angry, that he was unsuccessful.

"Oh, Milman," said Lady Orville, faintly, "do not attempt to interfere, it is all in vain." She begged them to leave her with me a moment. They closed the door. She was greatly

agitated. Beautiful as she was, she threw herself at my feet, and claimed my compassion : “ You are involved, Mr. Hamilton,” she said. “ You are the cause of the severity shewn to me. My mother has been informed that” —she hesitated—“ In short, the malignant, who are not satisfied with my fall, are eager to blast my fame, by attributing to me a guilty sentiment which I trust does not exist. Yet is it not strange?—I wish you not to leave me.” “ My uncle, in one moment,” I said, “ could pay the debts your generosity, your thoughtless good-nature alone have incurred ; it is but as a drop of water in the ocean of his riches ; his unparalleled kindness

to me gives me every reason to hope.” Lady Orville looked eagerly at me one moment, then shook her head, and said she feared nothing could be done. “It was to prevent this embarrassment,” she continued, “I wrote so frequently to implore you to see my mother and explain yourself to her;—that I might in my distress have a friend who felt for me—I sent to you so repeatedly: for if my part in this affair were only cleared up, Lord Orville would leave me my children, and all would yet be well. I care not what sacrifices I make—I can live on the coarsest fare—I could work for my children’s bread, but I cannot endure disgrace. Oh, Gra-

ham, how different was this entertainment from the one I had proposed to myself. I had, in the vanity of my heart, resolved to exhibit a scene of folly it is true, but one gratifying to my pride; instead of which I have received nothing but humiliation. I am supposed to be—I dare not, cannot go on: in short, I appeared this night in public to silence the most cruel and false reports. You, Graham, you—though heaven knows how unjustly accused, are one cause of Lord Orville's severity.

As she said this she looked upon me with streaming eyes. “I will save you, or die,” I cried, as I strained her to my bosom. Scarce were the

words pronounced, when I perceived that Lord Orville's agent had entered—had seen me embrace her.

Lady Orville sprang from me—in vain; terror overcame her, and she exclaimed, almost fainting, “All now is over with me!” I was at once aware of the imprudence of which I had been guilty, and the steward said ironically, that her Ladyship might as well accompany the gentleman who seemed so deeply interested for her. I seized him by the throat, and thrust him staggering from the room—then, recollecting the danger of remaining longer with her, I made my way to the door of the apartment, amidst the sneers and scoffs of the impertinent

footmen, and returned to the ante-chamber to witness the cruel scene.

There I again more calmly offered to secure the immediate payment of the amount the officers were authorized to levy. After a little consideration, having ascertained that I really was Sir Malcolm Hamilton's nephew, they replied — that if I would give them a *warrant of attorney*, they would immediately desist. My joy may be imagined. I almost embraced the fellow who spoke the words, though he looked like the arrantest knave of the pack. I executed the instrument required, which an attorney, sent for by the officers, prepared without the

loss of a moment, and I then flew to Sir Malcolm.

Hope pictured to me the joy of Lady Orville, when I should return and say to her, “you are relieved, at all events, from every pecuniary distress.” I paused not to reflect how my interference would strengthen every base suspicion already afloat. I paused not even to remember how strong were the prejudices of Sir Malcolm, and how much cause he had, at this particular moment, to be displeased with me.

His servant was still awaiting my return home. He said, that his master must on no account be disturbed; he had passed a very unquiet night, expecting me. I would not hear the

suggestions of prudence—I entered my uncle's apartment—and in a few words explained, without reserve, all that had taken place. What I said sufficiently awakened Sir Malcolm.

All that a distracted man could urge, I urged—all that romance and passion could suggest, I suggested. I implored —menaced —knelt;—and as I spoke, Lady Orville's portrait, disengaged by the violence of my gestures, appeared as it hung around my neck. Sir Malcolm snatched it from me with indignation. He was too angry to find utterance, and when he recovered himself, his resolution appeared so firmly taken, that every shade of hope vanished from my

mind. I ventured to remonstrate warmly, even to menace that I would never see Gertrude more. Sir Malcolm's head dropped upon his pillow—my ingratitude had struck him, and he remained exhausted and almost insensible. His servant interfered, and desired me to desist from urging his master farther. “Never but once, he whispered, never but once, did I, in the forty years I have been with him, see Sir Malcolm so moved, so offended as now;” and saying this, he tried to draw me from the apartment; but, remembering Lady Orville's situation, I still persisted. My uncle would not speak to or look upon me; he beckoned me to leave him—I was obliged to

obey. His servant assured me I should be his old master's death if I thus thwarted him : I went, and scarce remember the scene that followed.

Like a maniac I rushed through the streets. The crowd in the city was great: every one was hastening onward, each engrossed with his own cares, but all their cares together were light in comparison with mine. I returned to Lady Orville's house—all was still there. I dared not to inquire—I had already brought sufficient calamity upon that mansion. I entered a coffee-house—I took up the newspaper of the morning, and to add to the horrors of my situation, found it full of paragraphs, founded upon the

events of the preceding night, the most injurious both to me and to Lady Orville.

Whilst I stared, stupified by the consciousness of the ruin of which I had been the author, I was aroused by the arrival of the Sheriff's officer to whom I had given security, and who had found me after a weary search. He informed me that he had visited Sir Malcolm, and that he had refused to interfere: that judgment had therefore been entered and execution issued against me on the warrant of attorney I had given, so that I must either pay the money or become his prisoner.

“To prison, then”—I cried, “or to

death if possible!" But first I said, I must write to Gertrude, and to my father—to Lady Orville—then checking myself, Why should I?—My disgrace will be heard by them soon enough, and the less they hear of me, or from me in future, the better. I therefore declared myself ready to accompany the officer upon the instant, and, being desired to enter a hackney-coach, was conducted to prison.

CHAP. VII.

"I HAVE often been in prison," said Mr. M——, interrupting Mr. Hamilton, "so that you may spare yourself the description of the scene that followed : I can fully sympathise with your present dilemma. Your other adventures have, I acknowledge, been in a sphere of which I know nothing. Love has never given me any pain ; and until I came here, and wanted a housewife, I took care to avoid the chains of matrimony. You are yet young, Sir, and the me-

memory of all these griefs will, I trust, before long pass away. As soon as you have composed yourself, let me request you once more to resume your narrative."

In the prison I suffered no hardship, nor much inconvenience; but the blow was struck deep into the heart. My imprudence had blasted the character of an admired and a virtuous woman: the stain was indelible; every inquisitive eye had already, no doubt, noticed the paragraph, and every circumstance was so strong that there was little hope any justification would avail. By a few words the young, the beautiful Lady Orville's reputation was for ever

destroyed; no inquiry would be made by the multitude whether the report were true or false—no trial would ensue in which the guiltless might find justification. The consciousness of being innocent might console and support her—for me, and for the misery I had caused her, there was no consolation. Gertrude too—and my father—my poor old father, whose opinions were so strict, who had rather have seen me dead than disgraced—who had just heard, no doubt, of my intended marriage with Gertrude—who, I knew from my uncle, ardently desired it—what would he think when he should hear the cruel intelligence?

How should I prove Lady Orville's innocence; how to the world should I attempt to prove it? Who would believe me? The ready ear is open to every boaster who betrays the woman who confides in his honour: but were I to deny the hateful calumny, my words would be treated with scorn, my protestations with laughter.

There is nothing so terrible as anxiety, without the possibility of arriving at any conclusion; nothing worse than being calumniated without the possibility of justification; no situation so cruel as that of entire solitude, when feverish hopes, fears, and eager irritation torture the mind. From scenes of such rapid vicissi-

tudes, where events had crowded upon each other with such rapidity, the change to loneliness and silence was insupportable ; Sir Malcolm too, what had he not done for me ?—How had I returned his kindness, what, what would he think of my shameful, my inexplicable conduct ?

Happily for me, to spare me the agonies of such reflections, a fever came upon me. The delirium was violent, and it was several days before youth and the natural strength of my constitution prevailing, I recovered my reason and recollection. At length as the memory of what had taken place recurred to my mind, I faintly asked the person who attended me,

if any one had inquired for me. Not one of my former associates had done so. Of all who had flattered and professed, not one individual had even inquired whether I was alive or dead. It is seldom, in the course of years, that a man who is not in want of money, is in the situation of needing common kindness. It is, indeed, very seldom that any one, circumstanced as I was, can be exposed to such danger, or subjected to such disgrace, that he should consider the visit of an acquaintance a favour and an obligation; but this was now my case, and nothing could exceed my disappointment and mortification at finding that all who had followed, flattered, and

caressed, had fled at the first appearance of difficulty — that my follies and faults were exaggerated — that falsehoods were industriously spread against me — and that every error which I had committed, and which had been readily pardoned before, was now remembered and brought forward for the purpose of injuring and oppressing me.

Full of bitterness and melancholy, perceiving at once the littleness of the great, and the heartlessness of the sentimental, I had thrown myself upon my bed : I was still feeble and suffering — my thoughts had returned from the delusions of this vain life to the contemplation of the many ad-

vantages I had abused; when suddenly my prison door was opened, and Sir Malcolm, accompanied by the generous Moncrief, entered.

The latter had heard of my misfortunes : he had returned hastily from Scotland, upon reading the paragraphs concerning Lady Orville and myself, which he fearfully, yet fervently, hoped might not be true.—He had traced me to the place in which I was confined ; he had been informed that I was dangerously ill ; and without loss of time he had sought my uncle, and informed him of my situation.

My weakness was such that their sudden presence overcame and confused me. I looked about me, for-

getting where I was, and had some difficulty in recognizing them. "Where is my dear Graham?" said Sir Malcolm, in a short, sharp, querulous tone, addressing himself to Moncrief. — "Here Sir," I replied, in a faltering tone, for I durst not look upon him. "Forgive me," said Sir Malcolm. "Oh, my kind uncle," I said, and offered him my hand. Sir Malcolm pressed me to his bosom and wept. — I could not. They now consoled me with the utmost kindness; exhorted me to be tranquil and not to agitate myself by inquiries. They continued their visits and attentions for several days; but I could perceive from Moncrief's manner that there was

something which pressed heavily upon his mind,—something which he wished, yet dreaded to impart.

At length one morning, when my health was somewhat re-established, “We must lose no farther time,” said Moncrief, firmly; “it is not for Mr. Hamilton at a moment like this to yield to the violence of feeling—an imperious duty calls for the whole energy of his character. — Graham, prepare yourself”—“What, good Heavens! has occurred?” I cried eagerly, “is Lady Orville”—I stopped, I checked myself, upon perceiving that my uncle had shut his eyes up at that name, and recollecting myself, I inquired for Gertrude: Sir Malcolm opened

his eyes, but it was only to shed more tears, and he again pressed my hand. "She is ill and feeble," he said. "Ill!" I cried, starting up—"Oh, now we shall have him in a fever again," said Sir Malcolm; but, in a commanding tone, Moncrief implored me to be calm.

"If Sir Malcolm will leave the room," he said, in a firm but rather severe manner, "I will inform Mr. Hamilton of every thing that has passed since he was taken ill." My uncle said there was no need for his going, he would never leave dear Graham's bed. Moncrief then told me, that having read, and heard from strangers, the report circulated

against Lady Orville and me, he had without loss of time hastened to town, with an intent either to meet me as a foe, or a friend, according to my conduct; that, when arrived, he had heard, first, that Lady Orville and myself had eloped together; then, that I was in prison; and, lastly, that I was dead. He had seen Lady Orville at her mother's: he was fully convinced of her innocence and mine. My misfortunes had deeply affected him, and the more, as they were irremediable; the world had pronounced Lady Orville guilty—her name was blasted for ever in this world, and this upon my account. “Worse than this, still worse! awaits you,” conti-

nued Moncrief—"Gertrude"—"What of her?" I interrupted. Moncrief's voice failed. My uncle sobbed aloud; "The poor girl could not bear it," said Sir Malcolm; "she loved you, Graham, as I do, with her whole heart—not as fine London ladies love—she was just expecting you, your mither, too, and poor brither Jamie, they were a' expecting us—when a friend—for it's aye a friend comes to say what's unpleasant—a friend from Edinburgh dropped in to tell them what had happened, and said more, that you had shot yourself upon the discovery taking place—Graham, the poor girl could not bear it." "She is not dead"? I shrieked out.

“She is not yet dead,” said Moncrief, sternly, “but it is difficult, in such an illness as hers, to say how long she may yet be permitted to linger on.”—“To linger on,” I cried, “what is her illness?—for Heaven’s sake speak. Has my conduct—oh, do not torture me, say all, ail, for I can bear any thing now.”—“She felt with violence,” said Moncrief—“and she bore up under your cruelty without an expression even of bitterness; but your disgrace she had not strength of mind to endure, and the rumour of your death overpowered her;—the breaking of a blood vessel——”

I heard no more. Let those who have caused the death of the friend

they adored, from their rashness or ill conduct, judge what I felt—to paint it to others were useless—it was all that can be conceived of agony. I aroused myself only to have my heart torn by my poor uncle, who wept over me by my bed, resting his head upon his hands, calling out to me “Graham, you are my heir—every thing I have is your’s—my child, take all my money, there’s nae less than a million, and it’s a’ your’s if you’ll look up and be yourself again.”

I did recover—I did get well: the mind, under particular circumstances can do any thing. The paralytic has been known to rise from his bed, the

dumb has spoken: and the fear of losing my Gertrude, of not once again seeing her—of not once again having it in my power to tell her how dear she was to me, and that I was not so guilty as she imagined—aroused me, restored me. My uncle discharged my debt; I left the prison; and we set out for Scotland.

The way to my native home seemed endless; and when I arrived at Edinburgh, when I gazed again upon my beloved country, there was no enthusiasm within me, no love for it left. We hastened onward to my father's house; I came like the prodigal son who had wasted his substance in riot, and like him I felt

I should be received by my too kind parents. Oh, it was not their severity I feared; I feared alone their tenderness, and the altered looks of Gertrude. Alas! what matter my fears or my reflections? We meet in life the good and evil prepared for us as it comes; some with more, and some with less, submission. We task our reason in order to determine beforehand how we shall act, how look, what say; but the heart knows not its power, and nature bursts every bond and fetter when the hour of trial arrives.

I arrived at my father's gate—Sir Malcolm's feeble arm supported my more unsteady step. "Do not ask

for Gertrude," I said, almost suffocated, "I cannot bear to see her yet; I will first kneel before Captain Hamilton, and ask his forgiveness."

The maid opened the door to us; in answer to Moncrief's inquiry "Our young lady is a little better," she said. The words were a great relief to my heart. In a moment my father came forward to meet us; kneeling I received his blessing, and whilst weeping on his bosom, he repeated the words "Thank God, my son is restored to me." My mother came too, but turned away again, she seemed unable then to look upon me—My brothers and sisters surrounded and supported me. "Father," well might

I say, "I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

In vain should I attempt to paint the rest. None other can feel it—for who is there that has been loved as fondly, as faithfully as I was. Who can tax himself with such ingratitude? "Gertrude—where is she? Is she better?" had been faintly pronounced by Sir Malcolm. I durst not name her; they had prepared her, they said, to see me; they led me to her.

I found her seated by my uncle Richard. She looked very ill and pale, and so changed, oh who could bear to see it? Not I—my heart was not hardened—she smiled, and held

her dear hand to me, as if I had not been a villain; and her eyes, though streaming with tears, turned away for fear of lacerating my heart. Heavens, what reproaches were in those acts of generous kindness! How when I trembled as I approached her, speechless from contrition, shame, despair—how did she kindly bid me sit near her, and in a hollow tone of voice, and faintly, as if drawing her breath with difficulty, speak of her garden. I cannot continue.”

Here Mr. Hamilton paused, and wept without controul. His stern companion was moved.

“Heaven is just,” continued Mr. Hamilton, “and my punishment, great

as it is, was merited. I was given again to behold Gertrude's superiority. I was permitted again, once again, to witness her charms, her kindness, her disinterested sweetness; even when tortured by a cruel and deadly malady. I was condemned to see every beauty increase and soften under the influence of approaching death. Alas! I had not thought how much, how faithfully, this girl was capable of feeling attachment.

Sir Malcolm, whose thoughts no sorrows could entirely draw away from his money, continued to enumerate to my father and uncle the stores he possessed, and was resolved to settle upon Gertrude and me. "Give them,"

said my father, gravely, "to the wretched woman whose ruin Graham has caused; let Lady Orville possess the wealth; Gertrude needs it not." He spoke too truly, Gertrude needed little here; and her patience, her fortitude, her calmness, seemed to rise in proportion as her strength decreased.

She must die: I saw it plainly. I knew it from the first. There was no deception here—no flattery to beguile from day to day her surrounding relations by false hopes and delusive promises—phrases and circumlocution were here useless. All in the little mansion of my father bespoke truth and simplicity.

It was a mournful, but a striking example of Christian fortitude. I would I could bring it before others in all the dignity and sublimity of truth.

The few first days after my return she permitted me to support her into the garden, and place her upon the bench for a few moments during the heat of the day. She was soon unable to leave her bed—she often spoke a consolatory word to her friends—said she was happy; but when she looked upon me, and read in my countenance the agony of my soul, tears sometimes stole down her cheeks. Gertrude still lived: on that remaining breath—on that faint flush—that still beating, rapid pulse, I hung in breathless anx-[†]

iety. I watched life's decay, and hoped, when there was no room for hope.

The night before she died she desired to take the sacrament. Her whole family assembled to take it with her. I durst not—yet I knelt, though Scottish custom requires it not. I knelt in token of humility of despair, and I prayed even as my father's broken accents ascended in fervent prayer to heaven. How sweetly calm was Gertrude's countenance, when thus she heard him. Her hands were folded in each other. I thought too, that when he prayed for mercy on the sinner, her eyes sought for me. I was kneeling by her bed—she could

not see me. My heart had ceased to throb—my eyes to weep. The awful act of worship was over;—every one but my uncle Richard, my father, and myself, withdrew. My father approached Gertrude, and thinking, perhaps, he should see her alive no more, he kissed her forehead—saying, “God bless thee! dear sweet child, and pardon him who caused thy sufferings.” The Captain took my hand when my father said this, and Gertrude made sign to me to approach her—“Grieve not, cousin Graham,” she said, “I am happy!”

The heat was oppressive. The physician opened the window. The moon shone upon the garden—I looked for a

moment out to hide my tears:—the mild light, the fresh air seemed to revive poor Gertrude. “Where is Graham?” she said distinctly. I struggled with my feelings, and approached her. I supported her again on her pillow. Her father, and Dr. G. left us, and went towards the window. I pressed her lips to mine—she returned the kiss with fervour. “Be good—be comforted,” she said. Her breath was short. “Be a son to my poor father—fear God, cousin.” She never spoke one word after. A slight struggle followed. I called Dr. G. He took her hand to feel her pulse. —“It is all over now,” he said.

Moncrief remained with me through

the trying scene ; he tore me from the contemplation of its final close, and when I forgot myself, and the duties of a man, his generous and firm friendship saved me from my own despair.

I should have felt certain, beforehand, that such grief as I endured would have killed me ; but I was young, and with the elasticity of youth I have recovered ; but is it a recovery to feel as I do ? alone, unloved, unloving, in this cold world.— My poor uncle Richard ! he appeared calm, and professed fortitude ; but in vain. Human nature is but weak at best, and he had no pretensions to a character much out of the common way. “ It is the will of God — his

will be done,"—was all he ever said. No long stories—no complaints now; all was at an end: he was cut to the heart at once. Others pitied him, but I had no pity left for any thing. I obeyed, however, Gertrude's last words, and exerted myself to soothe the sufferings of her father.

CHAP. VIII.

YEARS have now intervened since these scenes of misery. I have buried my father. I have outlived my mother and both my uncles. Sir Malcolm's death shortly followed my Gertrude's. It took place somewhat suddenly; but I had the comfort of arriving in London time enough to see him and shew him every care. He made some alterations in his will, erased poor Gertrude's name, and then fixed his dying eyes on me.

“Nephy Graham,” he said, “do

not leave me while there is life in me; and when I am buried, have a care of those undertakers, they are now given to surcharge and expend. There is nae need Sir Malcolm, sae well known on 'Change, and in a' places, for a thrifty man, should go to his mither earth in muckle finer claiths than these he has worn lang syne. Take ye a' I possess :” he said, “sorrow has taught you now a wholesome lesson: I can feel for you; for you are as lone in the world as I was before I knew you.” The poor old man soon after expired in my arms.

Before I quitted London Moncrief told me that he had seen Lady Orville; she had lost something, he said, of

her beauty, but was cheerful ; for her kind heart was alone engrossed by relieving and soothing the sorrows of others. True religion enlightened her mind, and she felt independent of, but not hostile to, a world she had once loved too well. Miss Brandon expressed much interest in my fate, but married a young lord, who had been nearly ruined by his own extravagance, and was completely so by his union with an heiress.

To divert my thoughts, by novelty and change, from dwelling upon the scenes I had witnessed, and the sufferings I had endured, I quitted Europe. I pronounced upon myself that sentence of banishment so often passed

on criminals, who have done less wrong than I have. I hoped that the hurry of embarkation, the hopes, the fears, the anxieties of new countries, would give peace to my heart; but the moment of impulse over, I find myself in a new world, with all my old griefs around me. Life, after all that has been said of its brevity, is very, very long, and more persons find reason to complain of the slowness, than of the swiftness of its course. Every event which happens, and every hour which passes, reconciles the mind more and more to the prospect of death. If a man's efforts and exertions are successful, he feels satisfied with having attained the objects which he pro-

posed to himself. If, on the contrary, he fails in his favourite views, he is no ways afflicted at withdrawing from a world, which has nothing to offer him but disappointment and regret. In the one case he retires contented with his own glory; in the other he is glad to escape from the scene of his humiliation.

“ Pshaw ! ” interrupted Mr. M., these are the reflections of weakness and despondency. Do not give way to them. Life is well enough to those who will rouse themselves to use and enjoy it. Recollect how easy it is to argue as you are arguing. At all periods and under all circumstances, in youth, in age, in health, in

sickness, in wealth, in poverty, we may readily find reasons why we should be content and even rejoiced to die. There is always some trouble to be released from, some danger to be avoided by it."

"Ay," continued Mr. H. "but my condition is such as I have described it; and such, as far as I am sure of myself, are my sentiments. I have no prospects for the future—I have no tie on earth—on it there can be no sympathy with one like me. I can no longer worship life's splendid deceits as I have done; and my heart has exhausted all the visionary hopes of sentiment and love. In woman, even lovely woman, how can I seek

for consolation? — I have destroyed the best and fairest of them all. Even the mournful resource of assuaging my own sorrows by imparting them to others is denied me. You, Sir, I perceive, look upon me with contempt. You would say, and I feel it, that I have drawn all my miseries upon myself, by the weakness of my character; that I have trifled away my hour of life in vanity; and the deserved punishment of my errors has fallen upon me.

“I am not so severe as you imagine, Sir,” said Mr. M. offering his hand; “and your story has touched me, although I never felt any thing of the kind myself. Yet, remember you are

but young, and that all these romantic visions will pass away. Leave complaint and vain repining—it is idle—it is useless. Cast your eyes forward, infuse into your character some energy, and be at length a man. Look around you on the scene that Nature presents upon this vast continent.—The plaintain and palm shoot their tall straight stems on high, the mountains lift to the heavens their summits of everlasting snow; the rivers roll down to the ocean their measureless multitude of waters; brighter shine the constellations in the clear skies; the condor, mounting from the highest point of the highest rock, soars above the storms; all things in these

magnificent regions bear the stamp of greatness; let not man alone creep with the worm in his own familiar path, to be trodden upon and perish. You are, you acknowledge, for the first time independent; enjoy at least the pride, if not the pleasure, of dearly-purchased freedom, that you may boast you have lived one moment before you die."

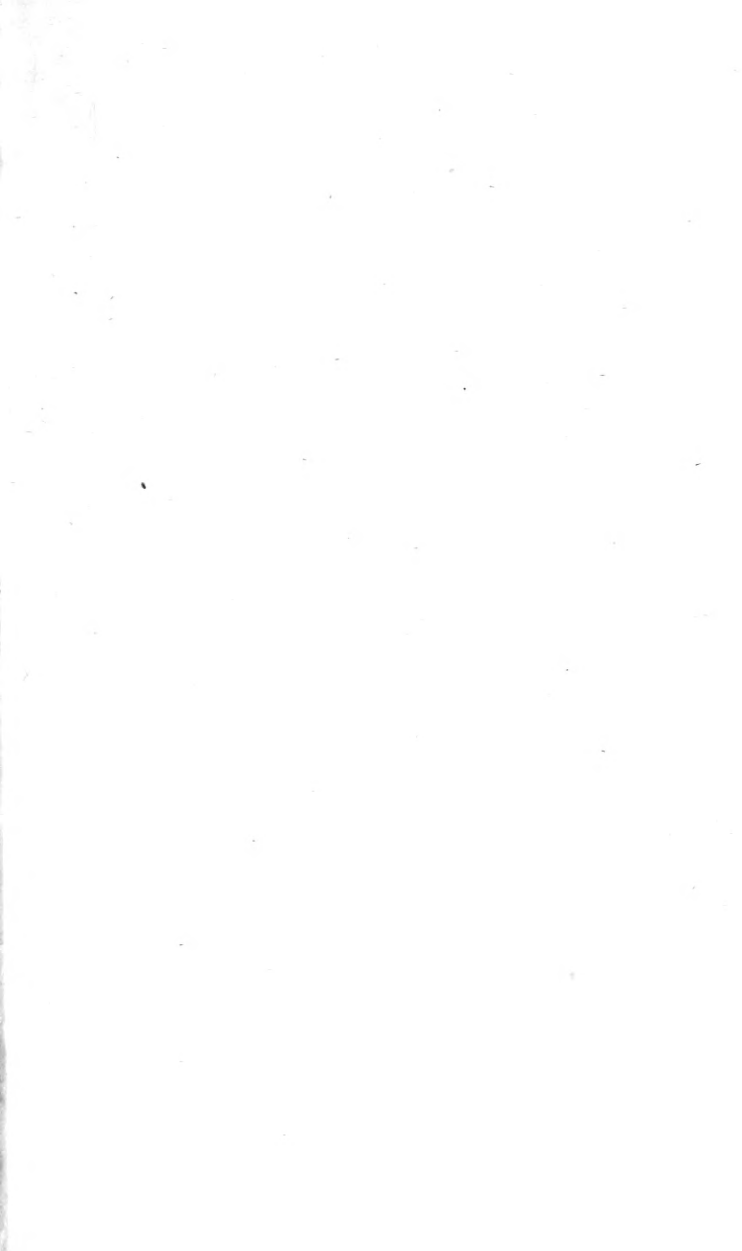
"All that you have said is true," replied Graham Hamilton, mournfully—"and I thank you for your advice. I will exert myself, I will bend my mind to my circumstances—but I carry with me the heavy load of self-reproach, and in this world I can never make reparation for the suffer-

ings I have inflicted. Happy, most happy are they to whom it is granted to do so—and who, if they have deeply injured one they loved, may yet, by years of labour or of penance, be permitted to expiate their errors and their crimes.”

THE END.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY S. AND R. BENTLEY, DORSET-STREET.



B218B

18

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.

ILL/SFR

MAR 09 1980

DATE WHEN FROM DATE RECEIVED

RECEIVED MAR 29 1980

3 1158 01064 3640

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 374 749 0

